DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 364 549 SP 034 924

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TITLE How Do We Keep Teachers in Our Classrooms? The TNT Response.
PUB DATE Mar 93
NOTE 6p.
PUB TYPE Journal Articles (080)
JOURNAL CIT IDRA Newsletter; p1,6-9 March 1993

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Beginning Teacher Induction; *Bilingual Education; *Bilingual Teachers; Elementary School Teachers; Elementary Secondary Education; *Inservice Teacher Education; Mentors; Program Descriptions; *Program Design; School Districts; Secondary School Teachers; Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Morale; *Teacher Persistence; Teacher Shortage
IDENTIFIERS Teachers Need Teachers Program; Texas (San Antonio)

ABSTRACT

This report outlines and evaluates a project, Teachers Need Teachers (TNT), developed by the Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA). TNT is a teacher induction program for first-year teachers who are certified in bilingual education and teach limited-English-proficient students. Beginning teachers are assigned to experienced bilingual education teachers who serve as mentors during the first year of teaching. Novices are required to observe their mentors promptly after the project begins; mentors are encouraged to meet with their beginning teacher at least twice weekly, record each meeting in a log, lend resources, share information, and hold planning and feedback sessions. Analysis of mentors' logs revealed distinct patterns of assistance with varying emphasis at different times during the semester and indicated that teacher feedback and behavior validate the need for support activities and benefits derived from them. The paper concludes with suggestions for induction programs at the district level: provide compensation and perks to the participants; waive appraisals and evaluations during the first year; provide instructional resources for the beginning teacher; and provide released time for observing peer teachers. (LL)

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INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

IDRA Newsletter

ED 364 549

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

How Do We Keep Teachers In Our Classrooms? The TNT Response

Frank Gonzales, Ph.D., and Alicia Salinas Sosa, Ph.D.

It is becoming more difficult for school districts to retain qualified professionals in teaching positions. According to Heyns (1988), 30 percent of beginning teachers leave the profession during their first two years, and 50 percent of the beginning teachers in urban school districts leave within five years. Summers' (1987) findings indicate that 26.5 percent of beginning teachers drop out of teaching within two years and 62 percent do so within five years. The poor retention rate is especially distressing because research indicates that the most talented leave in the greatest numbers (Schelechty & Vance, 1981).

Why do new teachers abandon the profession for which they have prepared for four or five years? Most leave because the negative factors related to their jobs far outnumber the positive factors they experience in the teaching profession. The situations in which they are placed do not allow them as much success as they had anticipated. They don't feel valued by the system. Often, there is no support system to help them through their first week, month, or year of teaching.

A particularly high attrition rate exists among certified bilingual education teachers. They are often a numerical minority group on a campus since often only one classroom per grade level is designated bilingual (Sosa, 1988). Moreover, they experience feelings of isolation among fellow grade level teachers in part because they use English and another language as a vehicle for instruction. It is not uncommon for the school principal and the bilingual teachers to have conflicting philosophies about how to best serve the limited-English-proficient (LEP) students. Factors contributing to bilingual teachers transferring out of bilingual education classrooms or leaving the profession entirely include: a greater than average preparation and work load due to dual language instruction; a feeling of isolation in their teaching area and grade level; and limited accessibility to commercially prepared instructional material (See Johnson & Montemayor, 1991).

Gray and Gray (1985) report that unless required to request assistance, 92 percent of new teachers do not seek help. To assist new teachers, a trial period known as the induction year has been established in which teachers are socialized into the norms/practices of the profession. In April 1991, the Texas State Board of Education established rule 149.22 "Induction Program for Beginning Teachers," which called for all beginning teachers without prior teaching experience to be assigned a mentor teacher. The rule also called for a one year participation in special inservice.

Odell (1989) identifies seven goals of teacher assistance programs. They are:

1. To provide continuing assistance to reduce the identified common problems for beginning teachers;
2. To support development of the knowledge and the skills needed by beginners to be successful in their initial teaching position;
3. To integrate beginning teachers into the social system of the school, the school district, and the community;
4. To provide an opportunity for beginning teachers to analyze and reflect on their teaching with coaching from veteran support teachers;
5. To initiate and build a foundation with new teachers for the continued

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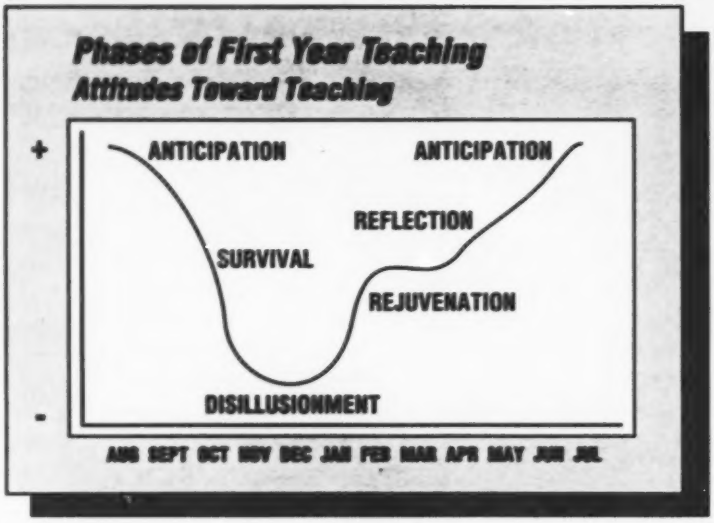
study of teaching;

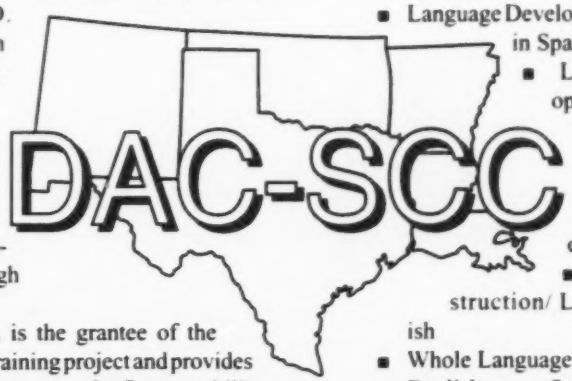
6. To increase the positive attitudes of beginning teachers about teaching; and
7. To increase the retention of good beginning teachers in the profession.

The TNT Induction Program

Moir (1990) and her colleagues have identified six phases that new teachers experience during their first year of teaching. These states are: anticipation, survival, disillusionment, rejuvenation, reflection, and anticipation once again. The graph at right provides a timeline of the six stages.



All beginning teachers experience these phases, albeit not at the same pace. IDRA has developed an induction program for first-year teachers who are certified in bilingual education and teach limited-English-proficient students: Project TNT (Teachers Need Teachers). Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Title VII, Office of Bilingual Education, and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA), TNT provides a teacher induction process for first-year bilingual education classroom teachers in the San Antonio metropolitan area. Each year of the project, twenty-five new bilingual education teachers from five school districts are assigned an experienced bilingual education teacher who serves as mentor during their first year of teaching. At the end of the project, approximately 75 new bilingual teachers will have experienced an induction process with 75 mentor teachers. The project is a cooperative effort between IDRA and the bilingual education administrators in the five school districts: Edgewood ISD, Harlandale ISD, San Antonio ISD, South San Antonio ISD, and Southwest ISD. Fourteen campuses are involved in the project. It began in July 1991 and will continue through June 1994.



IDRA is the grantee of the short-term training project and provides the induction process for first-year bilingual education teachers in the participating schools. Participants are paid a monthly stipend for their activities. The five school districts are reimbursed for the teachers' release time. Some new instructional materials are purchased each year of the project. Monies are available for consultants, evaluation of the data collected, and the administration of the project. This project allows the five school districts to comply with Texas Education Code Rule 149.22 Induction Program for Beginning Teachers for this high priority population at no expense to the district.

Project Components

The major components of the project consist of training and support activities:

Training activities include six workshops in which participants are provided information about various topics. They share their concerns and plan their mentoring activities for each month. Specific topics for the workshops were finalized after IDRA staff conducted a teacher needs assessment. Topics included:

- State Plan for Educating Limited English Proficient Students
- Philosophy of Coaching and Mentoring
- First and Second Language Acquisition
- Language Development Activities in Spanish
- Language Development Activities in English
- Learning Styles in Culturally Different Students
- Reading Instruction/ Literature in Spanish
- Whole Language Strategies
- English as a Second Language Strategies in the Content Areas
- Culture in the Classroom

Support activities are important to help maintain training benefits. Support is provided through:

Bulletins - The project director, the participants, principals, and central office personnel in the five districts communicate through a monthly bulletin called *El Enganche/The Link*. The bulletin announces up-coming events and includes classroom tips and successful teaching practices from the participants themselves.

Instructional Materials - IDRA has a lending library of approximately 5,000 bilingual/ multicultural instructional materials available to participating teachers on a check-out basis. Access to instructional materials in Spanish is a benefit to both beginning and mentor teachers.

Mentoring Activities - Campus administrators were asked to assign a mentor teacher to each beginning teacher. According to Sosa (1988) a mentor teacher must:

- Be considered a competent teacher as judged by the Texas Teacher Appraisal System;
- Have three or more years teaching experience;
- Demonstrate appropriate teacher/ pupil interaction;
- Maintain a positive and attractive learning environment;
- Have formulated a teaching philosophy concerning bilingual education;
- Demonstrate good listening skills;
- Focus on establishing positive and caring working relationships;
- Exhibit patience and use empathetic skills during stressful episodes; and

- Possess the appropriate vocabulary to describe teaching practices.

Mentor teachers are encouraged to meet with their beginning teacher at least twice weekly. Each meeting is recorded in a mentoring log. The log contains information relative to the topic for the intervention, how the concern was diminished plus future plans and follow up activities that result from the intervention.

Project TNT provides a collegial coaching assistance system where the support teacher works closely with the beginning teacher through a number of formal and informal interactions.

Observations and Demonstrations - Beginning teachers are required to observe their mentors promptly after the project begins. They are encouraged to observe other teachers assigned to bilingual education classrooms as well. Observations may range from twenty to forty-five minutes. The observer uses the Texas Teacher Appraisal System (TTAS) observation form in order to familiarize the beginning teacher with the process.

Prior to the scheduled observations by the administration, the mentor teacher observes the beginning teacher twice. After each observation, the mentor provides suggestions on how to improve or enhance instruction, discipline, classroom climate and management, and other teaching skills. Mentor teachers often plan a demonstration with the beginning teacher's students the following day, or teams may combine their classes for a period so the mentor teachers may demonstrate for the beginning teachers.

Lending Resources and Sharing Information - Beginning teachers have few instructional materials and most schools provide little more than colored paper for the bulletin boards. Mentor teachers, on the other hand, have collected and garnered material from various sources during their professional careers. They know where materials are "stashed" on campus and they know from whom they might obtain them. Mentor teachers often lend beginning teachers visuals, concrete models and equipment to enhance their lessons. In numerous instances, mentor teachers have taken their novices on garage sale shopping trips in order to equip learning centers and to obtain books, games, and manipulatives.

Mentor teachers serve as the "information center" for beginning teachers. Questions from, "How do I get my pencil sharpener replaced?" to, "How do I get the concept of place value over to my students?" can be answered by the mentor teacher. Mentor teachers are selected because they are caring/sharing people. They care about students, and they share with their novices.

Planning and Feedback Sessions - The team has several occasions to plan. They plan at the six workshops and they plan during the mentoring sessions. They also plan spontaneously during their lunch breaks or as they take their students down the hall. Evaluation of the planned activities and feedback are more difficult to achieve. The team must deliberately set aside time to reflect on the planned process. This is usually done before or after school hours. The beginning teacher is asked, "How do you think it went?" From past experiences, the mentor teacher is able to provide constructive feedback and guidance.

Findings

This section describes two major findings: 1) analysis of mentor teacher logs revealed distinct patterns of assistance with varying emphasis at different times during the semester; 2) teacher feedback and behavior validate the need for support activities and the benefit derived from them.

First, in examining the mentoring logs, IDRA found that topics of concern vary by semester. Mentor teacher interventions with the beginning teachers indicated that the patterns of concern varied during the school calendar. Activities seemed to cluster around the scheduled time of certain major activities. For example, prior to teachers' initial formal assessment by the school administrator, mentor teachers responded to teachers' concerns with lesson preparation and delivery. Other mentoring activities became

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Mentoring Log Interventions

Topic of Intervention	Fall '91 Number	Fall '91 Percent	Spr. '92 Number	Spr. '92 Percent
1. Instructional assistance and planning	78	28	156	34
2. Classroom management decisions	36	13	20	4
3. Campus or district procedures	35	13	57	13
4. Instructional materials	33	12	52	12
5. Texas Teacher Appraisal System (TTAS) observations or evaluations	33	12	37	8
6. Discipline management decisions	25	8	20	4
7. Assessing, testing, or grading issues	16	5	37	8
8. Parent conferences or parent involvement	9	3	27	6
9. New teacher anxiety	8	3	13	3
10. Professional advice or assistance	5	2	10	2
11. Instructional aides			8	2
12. TEA audit/compliance			9	2
13. Miscellaneous issues	3	1	9	2
Total	283	100	455	100

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salient in May when teachers became concerned with grading and promotion issues and requested the mentor's assistance in this area.

The table on page six contains a summary of mentoring activities during the first year of the project. A total of 738 mentoring logs were submitted during the first year of the project. During October, November and December, 283 interventions were recorded. Between January and May, 455 interventions were recorded.

The largest percentage of mentoring occurred in the area of instructional assistance and planning (28% fall, 34% spring). The increase in the spring semester is probably due to the rapport established in the fall semester.

Districts that invest in an induction program increase their chances of retaining teachers in critical shortage areas.

Classroom management activities declined (36% fall, 20% spring). Beginning teachers received more assistance with classroom management parameters early in the first semester. Most needed only to refine their management style during the second semester.

Questions about campus and district policies and procedures remained an issue both semesters (13%). The need for assistance with instructional materials also remained the same both semesters (12%).

Assistance with the Texas Teach Appraisal System (TTAS) observations or evaluation accounted for 12% of the interventions in the fall semester. However, this topic dropped to only 8% of the interventions in the spring semester. The fear associated with the TTAS appeared to decline if the teacher had a successful evaluation in the fall.

Discipline management decisions also declined after one semester (8% fall, 4% spring). The logs documented a 50% decline in the discipline problems of beginning teachers after one semester.

Assessing, testing or grading issues increased from one semester to the next, (5% fall, 8% spring). Many beginning teachers were not sure of how to assess a student's abilities or how to test for grading purposes.

Issues related to parents also increased between the two time periods, (3% fall, 6% spring). These issues included parent conferences, parents' roles in the classroom, reporting of abusive parents, and PTA activities.

New teacher anxiety remained the same both semesters (3%), as did professional advice and assistance (2%).

In the spring semester, two additional intervention topics arose: 1) how to utilize or work with instructional aides (2%), and 2) concerns about the Texas Education Agency compliance visits and audits (2%).

Teachers participating in the induction program confirmed the need to provide support services such as those included through the TNT program. Their behavior clearly validated their desire to be fully functional and effective bilingual education teachers. Through their consistent use of IDRA's instructional materials and bulletins, teachers demonstrated that these types of materials and assistance were not available to them outside of the TNT program.

Each teacher provided IDRA with feedback validating the need for and benefits of the program support provided. All 50 participating teachers contributed at least six ideas proven successful in their classroom (one for each issue of the bulletin). Teachers in the TNT program reported having read about and implemented ideas recommended by their peers with good results.

Over 90 percent of the participating teachers attended the two open house events held at the IDRA Resource Lending Library. During the course of the program nearly 800 pieces of instruction materials were checked out including records, children's books with cassettes, story puppets, puzzles, bulletin board aides, and "how-to" books (on masks, celebrations, art projects). The mentor teachers, who had more experience and resources, made equal use of these resources as the first-year teachers. On several occasions teachers commented on the need for each school district to have a similar resource lending library.

No beginning teacher declined the opportunity to observe their mentor teacher. All 25 scheduled an observation within the first month in the program. Their comments revealed this as one of the best learning experiences of the TNT program because they could see in action new aspects of classroom organization and delivery of instruction. Having the experience of observing others and being observed using the TTAS form further helped the first-year teachers demystify the unknown subsets of lesson observation.

Suggestions for Induction Programs

Beginning bilingual education teachers need experienced bilingual teachers to help them through the induction process. An induction program requires resources. Districts that invest in an induction program make it easier for beginning teachers and increase the chances of retaining teachers in this critical shortage area in the teaching profession.

In addition to providing a comprehensive induction program for beginning teachers at the campus level, districts must do the following in order to retain beginning bilingual education teachers:

1. Provide compensation and perks to the participants. Mentor teachers must be compensated for mentoring, coaching and participating in an induction program. Release time for observations, coaching and planning is extremely important for the mentor teacher as well as for the beginning teacher.
2. Waive appraisals and evaluations during the first year. Beginning teachers enter their first job already anxious. It is unfair to expect the first-year teacher to perform comparably to the veteran teacher within the first semester. Appraisals and evaluation procedures only raise the anxiety level of the new teacher. All appraisals and evaluations for first-year teachers should be waived.
3. Provide instructional resources for the beginning teacher. Beginning teachers have few if any instructional materials when they are assigned a classroom. Some schools provide a "CARE" package of materials for new teachers which consists primarily of decoration items insufficient for instructional purposes. New teachers need funds for materials and access to instructional resource libraries within the district.
4. Provide release time for observing peer teachers. Beginning teachers learn by observing veteran teachers. A process of scheduling observations and providing release time from the classroom should be an integral part of an induction year. Peer observations should not be limited to year-one of teaching. As beginning teachers enter their second and third years, they will be ready to address other teaching/grouping issues. Retaining effective teachers is not an easy task. Good teachers don't just

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happen. Teachers who enjoy teaching and who are nunurtured by the system to provide the best instruction possible become those memorable individuals that make a difference in students' lives. Helping the beginning teacher through the first year of teaching is the crucial first step to retaining effective teachers in our schools.

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